

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-30 remain pending under consideration in the present application, of which claims 1, 21 and 22 are independent.

With appreciation, it is noted that the Office Action indicates (see present Office Action, page 7, item 3) claims 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20 and 27-30 as containing allowable subject matter.

Noted - IDS Considered

The indication (see attachment to the Office Action mailed April 25, 2008) that the Information Disclosure Statements as filed on December 20, 2005, October 4, 2006 and March 1, 2007 and references listed therein have been considered is noted with appreciation.

Noted - Drawings Approved

The indication (see Office Action Summary of the Office Action mailed April 25, 2008, box 10(a) as checked) that the Drawings (submitted on December 20, 2005) have been approved is noted with appreciation.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-7, 13, 16, 19 and 21-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Uda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,463,829, Uda hereinafter) in view of Pirio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,861, Pirio hereinafter).

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is filed as a U.S. national-stage application under 35 U.S.C. § 371, claiming priority to an earlier filed International PCT Application No. PCT/JP2003/008316, which was filed on June 30, 2003 (see Transmittal Letter To The United States Designated/Elected Office Concerning A Filing Under 35 U.S.C. 371). Therefore, the present application shall

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be entitled to the benefit of the earlier-filed PCT application and associated filing date of June 30, 2003.

Because the priority date of the present application is the filing date of June 30, 2003 of the PCT Application, such a priority date is clearly earlier than the U.S. filing date of December 23, 2004 of Uda et al. In fact, the priority date (June 30, 2009) of the present application is even earlier than the foreign priority filing date (March 25, 2004) of Uda et al.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Uda is not qualified as prior art against the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the rejection of claims 1-7, 13, 16, 19 and 21-26 is improper. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would assist in resolving any issues pertaining to the allowability of the above-identified application, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. Please grant any required extensions of time and charge any fees due in connection with this request to deposit account no. 50-4610.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 2, 2009

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